

BALLET TODAY

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1951



1/- Robert Helpmann: Two Pages of Pictures 1/-

PETER REVITT'S

BALLET GUYED

with a foreword by MARY CLARKE

is a book of brilliant caricatures of the leading dancers of the day. Peter Revitt's work needs no introduction to readers of "BALLET TODAY" and his genius for the witty comment in line is here crystallised in 36 dazzling sketches including Margot Fonteyn, Violetta Elvin, Beryl Grey, Moira Shearer, Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, John Hart, Alexis Rassiné.

5/- (by post 5/3)

Published by:—BALLET TODAY, 15 PENRHYN ROAD, KINGSTON-on-THAMES

D. DI SALVO

Famous Sunray Shoes



Prices

Blocked Satin, Pink, White or Blk	16/-
Unblocked "	15/-
Blocked Canvas, Pink, White or Blk	12/6
Unblocked "	10/-
Blocked White Leather " ...	18/-
Unblocked " ...	16/-
Unblocked only best quality Leather in Red, Black, Pink, Blue, or any other colour ...	16/6
Postage and Packing, 6d. per pair.	

As the shape of foot varies with different dancers, I have a variety of models, namely A, B, D, S, and R & L. (Right & Left Foot), to fit everyone correctly, thus ensuring the maximum degree of comfort while dancing. If desired, outline of the foot can be sent to enable me to decide on the most suitable model you require.

Write: D. Di SALVO, 11, West Street, Cambridge Circus,
London, W.C.2.

Telephone: TEM. BAR 9201 and 4134.

The School of Russian Ballet

(System of Nicolas Legat)

THE SCHOOL OF ARTISTRY

Studio :

ST. LUKE'S SOUTH HALL,
St. Luke's Street, CHELSEA, S.W.3
Telephone — Freemantle 1749

A first class duplicating service for
DANCING SCHOOLS, CLUBS,
and TEACHERS

PROGRAMMES, REPORTS,
CIRCULARS, ETC.

MABEL EYLES, 395, HORNSEY ROAD,
LONDON, N.19
ARC. 1765

BALLET TODAY

Vol. 3. No. 32

February/March 1951

Published by the Proprietor, B. G. Herschel,
at 15 Penrhyn Road, Kingston-on-Thames
Telephone Kingston 2639

Edited by P. W. Manchester
Telephone Flaxman 9552

EDITORIAL COMMENT

BARELY had we begun to hope that we had returned to our normal schedule after the delays caused by the printing vicissitudes of last year when we, like all other magazines, were hit by the paper crisis. We crave your indulgence if, for the next few issues, there is some variation in the quality of paper. We are doing the very best we can in most difficult circumstances. Due to this fresh crisis and the consequent delay we decided it would be best to date the present number as for February and March. The April issue will come out during the last week in March so that we then revert to our normal publishing procedure, and subscriptions will, of course, be extended so that they cover the twelve issues.

New Year Honours for Ballet

Ballet in England was well-remembered in the New Year's Honours List. How proud we shall be in future to talk of Dame Ninette de Valois of Sadler's Wells Ballet, and we felicitate her on an honour so well deserved.

It seems only the other day that we were congratulating Mr. P. J. S. Richardson on his forty-year editorship of *The Dancing Times*. Now we send him congratulations once again on his O.B.E. Mr. Richardson has ever been the sturdy champion of English dancers and was drawing attention to their merits long before it was fashionable to do so.

Finally, we all look forward to the day when the latest music knight, Sir William Walton, will give us another ballet score.

Robert Helpmann

Hardly had we accustomed ourselves to the idea that, apart from guest appearances, Robert Helpmann would in future be an absentee from the Ballet, than we learned that the first of such appearances would be for the opening three performances of the revival of *The Prospect Before Us* at Sadler's Wells Theatre on the 13th, 17th and 20th February. There must be hundreds, possibly thousands of new ballet-goers to whom his Mr. O'Reilly has hitherto been only a legend. A whole issue of *Ballet Today* would hardly suffice to do justice to this artist. The middle pages, however, do try to show something of his unmatched versatility and will serve as a remembrance, however inadequate, of an amazing career.

A GROUPING FROM
JOHN CRANKO'S NEW
BALLET "PASTORALE"
AT SADLER'S WELLS
THEATRE (SEE PAGE 19)



Photograph by
Baron

Festival Ballet

The company is now on a six weeks' tour of the English provinces before going to Monte Carlo for the whole of April—this contract being a fine feather in cap of the most recently formed of English companies. It will return to the Stoll Theatre on May 7th for a season lasting at least eight weeks, when Danilova, Chauviré and Frederic Franklin will, amongst others, appear as guest artists. Additions to the repertoire will be *Gaieté Parisienne*, *Graduation Ball* and its sequel, *Girls' Dormitory*, which has never been seen in England.

This company's revival of *Le Spectre de la Rose* must rank as the most beautiful ever seen in this country since the original production which was most carefully reproduced in all its innocent and airy beauty of decor. John Gilpin's performance was most carefully considered and his dancing was technically magnificent. There has, however, been only one Nijinsky and I would like to feel that this ballet, and *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, remained as unseen memorials to his immortal name.

Lichine's little *Harlequinade* which accompanied the Christmas performances of *Casse Noisette* was neither here nor there. The costumes, apart from Riabouch-

inska's, were pleasing. John Gilpin again danced beautifully though still without that attack which makes a stage performance, and Keith Beckett, one of the discoveries of Festival Ballet, showed that he could have done wonders with Pierrot had he been given a chance. Tatiana Riabouchinska has so completely changed her style to that of a strong technician that the Riabouchinska of pre-war days is virtually unrecognisable.

A Special New Feature

I should like to draw your attention to *Ballet Vocabulary*, a new feature beginning this month. Many books about ballet for the ordinary reader have included glossaries of the more obvious positions or steps but these have never been by any means comprehensive. The whole idea is to explain the step, not as regards method, which is a matter between teacher and pupil, but in such a way that an ordinary member of the audience will recognise it when it is done on the stage. This is, I believe, the first time that any serious attempt has been made to describe a wide range of steps in this way and newcomers to Ballet in particular will find it most helpful.

P.W.M.

JOURNAL OF A JOURNEY (2)

By FRANKLIN WHITE

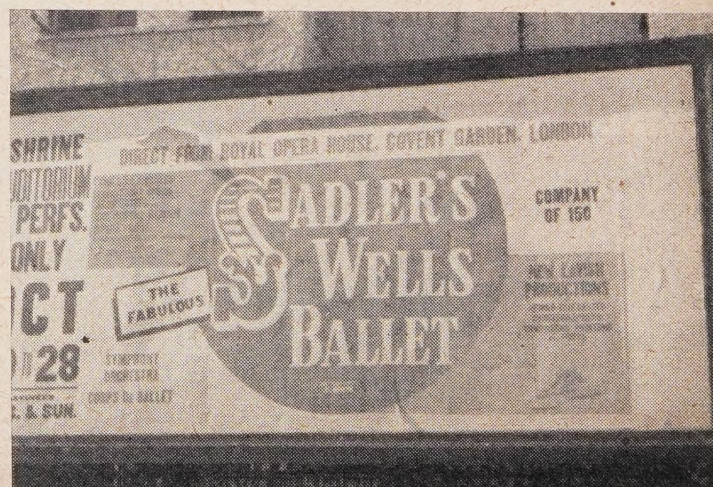
LITTLE incidents sometimes set the atmosphere of what is to come. So with Los Angeles everything went so well from the beginning that success followed in a seemingly natural course. At the station, instead of the usual buses and a certain amount of waiting for both people and luggage, a fleet of taxis, all carrying advertisements for our season inside, immediately whisked us away along the six-track avenues to one

of the best hotels in the city, the Ambassador, where the entire company was to stay.

The Fantastic Film City

Distance will always be one of the first things that will come to my mind when thinking of Los Angeles. The hotel was fairly well in the middle of the several hundred square miles of that city, yet, with the limited

THE FAMOUS POSTER WHICH PUBLICISED THE COMPANY ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES. NO OTHER PUBLICITY WAS NECESSARY — ITS APPEARANCE WAS ALL THAT WAS NEEDED FOR A "SELL OUT"



Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge



THESE HOLLYWOOD BATHING BEAUTIES ARE DOROTHEA ZAYMES, WENDY WINN, ANNE HEATON AND PAULA DUNNING IN THE SWIMMING POOL AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

amount of public transport, it is impossible successfully to move around without a car. It was six miles to the station, four to Hollywood and Beverley Hills, ten to the nearest part of the beach and five to the Shrine Auditorium. Buses were provided to take us to the latter before the show and rehearsals took place in Miss Fay's dancing studio near the hotel. There is no complete centre for shops, theatres, etc., everything is spread out over the whole city, so that places like our hotel have become sufficient unto themselves, containing all types of shops, restaurants (including the famous Coconut Grove), cinema, post office, beauty salons, doctors and so on. Outside, the hotel is surrounded by its own palm decked grounds, containing various private houses, gardens and yet another swimming pool for us to spend much time in when time and lack of transport kept us at "home".

As usual, we were not able to use the stage before our opening at the Shrine Auditorium, which opening had become one of the big events of the season, at which all Hollywood and Los Angeles society attended. In front of the "Turkish type" concrete pillars and domes of the foyer entrance two searchlights swept the skies as, beneath, one of the most glamorous audiences that I have seen since the Royal Command Performance at the "Garden" stepped out of their cars to the applause of a large crowd lining the street. A few of the company unobtrusively mingled among the gathering . . . to see the very people who had come to see them. There were so very many familiar faces like Vivien Leigh and Sir Laurence Olivier, the latter with a small moustache grown for his role in *Sister Carrie*. Over six thousand miles from home and about to dance to quite a new audience and yet here were

faces so familiar to us from London. To attempt to name all those who I saw go in, let alone those I was told were there, would take the rest of this letter, so I will just say that they were a delightful audience to dance to, so appreciative, creating a wonderful atmosphere throughout the entire evening. This was something that was present throughout our season in Los Angeles, this feeling of genuine delight at our success and it was so continually expressed in every way, by those who have won acclaim for themselves.

Even during the most glamorous performances there is usually something of amusing contrast going on somewhere, even at the most moving moments. None of it of great content, perhaps, but funny to see going on just out of the audience's vision. On this important night, with all the glamour, society and stars all "bringing down the house" in their acclaim for the company, I noticed that the floor of King Florestan's palace was marked out as a basket ball pitch in the broadest white lines! I wonder if the audience noticed it, or one of the little negro boys, used as pages on either side of the throne, sitting there quite unconcerned with the audience or the dancing in front of him, but peering intently into the wings at the three Ivans warming up for that strenuous dance! He had been sweet in rehearsal too; when told that he had to hold the Queen's train and walk behind, he took hold of the end of Julia Farron's short practice tunic and proceeded to follow her wherever she went, holding on like grim death!

Back at the Ambassador after the show, Mr. Hurok and Mr. Humphrey Lester, dance director of the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera Company, gave a party in the company's honour. Among the guests were Greer

Garson, Gene Tierney, Joseph Cotton, Louis Hayward, Cyd Charisse, Tony Martin, Barry Fitzgerald, Enzo Pinza and Charlie Chaplin. It was most pleasant to have Mr. Chaplin among us, especially after his previous kindness following a party given by him in New York, at which some members of the company were present. He then arranged for us a special morning showing of the revival of his film *City Lights* while we were in Philadelphia.

There were other parties, the British Consul's and elsewhere, where we met many well known people of Hollywood. Among others, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Pidgeon, Constantine (the Hollywood photographer) and Lester Horton of the Lester Horton Dance Theatre.

We visit the Studios

I think the day the majority of the company met most of those of the film colony was when Mr. Humphrey Lester arranged for groups of us to be entertained at the various studios. The group that went to Warner Brothers consisted of Pauline Wadsworth, Greta Hamby, Violetta Elvin, Elizabeth Kennedy, Jane Edgeworth, Christine du Boulay, Mary Drage, Leslie Edwards, Kenneth MacMillan, Ray Powell, Richard Ellis, Douglas Steuart and Oscar Berlin (one of the American staff of both last year and this). Doris Day was our hostess for lunch, when we met several other stars.

Although Warner Brothers were quite busy at the time it was unfortunate that it was a day when there was not too much being "shot" on the lots. A *Street-car Named Desire* had the day before gone on location to New Orleans and another film whose name and cast I have unfortunately forgotten, was also away from the studios. However, we were able to see a few minutes of the filming of the play *Goodbye My Fancy*, with Joan Crawford, Frank Lovejoy and Robert Young. Later we were taken to where a full size replica of a merchant ship had been sunk into a field and we watched the last day's shooting of the battle scenes between an American submarine and a Jap decoy ship in *Operation Pacific*. The rubber dummies made horribly realistic dead, especially one lying over a box off the set and which we took for a sleeping man until a closer inspection disproved this idea. It was amusing to see other dead come to life again after the most realistic spraying of machine gun fire, with bullet holes appearing all around the victim, and interesting to find out how this effect is produced. They are genuine enough even if not actually made by the gun fire.

From there our bus took us through the streets of sets left up after their original films until such time as they may be wanted again. One was some mid-west town, another was French, from which around a corner led the Mid-Victorian New York street with its tram tracks, used in *Life With Father*. They all

looked so substantial until a closer inspection showed that they were all wood and plaster facades moulded and painted into such reality. On the way back we called in at the Hollywood Bowl, a less impressive sight than I had expected, but then it was the "off" season and I should think that the right time to see it is when it is lit up at night and with a full audience and a performance going on.

Others of the company had gone on to 20th Century-Fox, R.K.O., Paramount, Universal and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, meeting again Greer Garson, Gene Tierney, Cyd Charisse, Danny Kaye, Hedy Lamarr and many other stars and directors. Danny Kaye had previously come round to our dressing rooms to meet us all again, after a performance. He had been backstage quite a lot last year, both in New York and Chicago.

A real enthusiast

I mentioned earlier the enthusiasm over the company and our success in Los Angeles with the film colony and artists in general, as well as the big social event that it had been made, not to mention the success with Los Angeles in general. This example of just one person is, I think, a great honour to us. Eugene Loring (choreographer of *Billy the Kid*), not only worked from an early hour on the dances of a new film with Cyd Charisse, but attended the running of his ballet school and then came to every show

EXACTLY WHO IS GOING TO PHOTOGRAPH WHOM IS A MOOT POINT AT WARNER STUDIOS, BUT DORIS DAY AND MICHAEL SOMES ARE IN THE BACKGROUND, WITH RAY POWELL IN FRONT

Photograph by Franklin White



throughout the two weeks' season. *The Rake's Progress* was not presented there, so to see this, Mr. Loring flew up in time for a performance in San Francisco and was able to stay just long enough to attend a party given for us in the Memorial Museum next door to the Opera House, and then flew back to Los Angeles in time for a rehearsal next day. I hear that Gene Kelly was also filming all day and coming to every performance at the Shrine.

The Sleeping Beauty had not been done since New York; the size of its production making it impracticable to present it anywhere else except Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and Boston. Here at the Shrine Auditorium with its quite enormous stage, the season was taken up with the three classical ballets, showing various casts in the leading roles. Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann opened the season with *The Sleeping Beauty* with Frederick Ashton as Carabosse. Violetta Elvin, having just rejoined us after having returned to England after New York, was to have danced *Blue Bird* with Alexis Rassiné, but toe trouble at the very last minute prevented her and Rowena Jackson danced it. Moira Shearer and John Hart followed in *The Sleeping Beauty* the next evening and later in the season Ray Powell did some performances of *Carabosse*. Rowena Jackson again did *Blue Bird*, this time with Brian Shaw. Beryl Grey also danced *Aurora* with John Hart, and Violetta Elvin did her first *Aurora* of the tour with John Field.

In *Le Lac des Cygnes* Los Angeles saw first Margot Fonteyn with Michael Somes, then Beryl Grey and on the last night Moira Shearer, both the latter being partnered by John Field. *Giselle* had one performance with Margot Fonteyn, Robert Helpmann and Leslie Edwards.

San Francisco — The Beautiful City

After a wonderful last night reception, as it had been throughout our stay there, and several farewell parties, we left at an early hour on one of the new streamlined South Pacific trains for the nine hour, five hundred mile journey, to San Francisco. This follows the coast all the way up, much of it running right on the edge of the ocean in a narrow plain, backed by mountains. It was a perfect day and those great surf rollers crashing down on to white sand, practically on the railway track, looked so tempting to swim in.

When thinking of San Francisco it is a temptation to spend much time describing that city of hills with those toy-looking cable cars rattling up and down the breakneck slopes. There are even some places which are quite impassable for the best-of-gearred cars, for sharp angular turns have to be negotiated as well as the steep and ever changing elevations. There are two bridges, with Alcatraz between in the middle of the bay. Overlooking it is Fisherman's Wharf, where



Photograph by Franklin White

VIOLETTA ELVIN AND BRYAN ASHBRIDGE SOMEWHERE ON
THE ROAD TO SAN FRANCISCO

the trawlers and fishing smacks unload their catch, taken often as far afield as Alaska, and where it is sold directly on the stands around the jetty, or in the colony of special fish restaurants overlooking it all. It is quite the most cosmopolitan city that I have ever been in. A little way back from the wharf is the large Italian section, an international settlement and then China Town. A Chinese-American friend took me around China Town and I had Chinese food that little resembled anything that I had experienced before under that name. Equally different and much sweeter was the Japanese food, contrasting again with all the other types of food and places that we went to. Then there was "Top of the Mark", best at night, with the blaze of lights below showing up the different sections of the city, the Golden Gate, with the Pacific beyond and the bay opening out on the near side of the bridge silhouetted by a line of amber lights along the curves of the suspension. Likewise lit up is the approximately eight mile long Oakland Bridge, the furthestmost part hidden by Treasure Island rising up in the middle. Out between both bridges, Alcatraz's revolving searchlight and beyond, in the hills, the Campanile of the University of Berkeley. Perhaps even better at night is to look back over the elevations of Knob and Russian Hills, from a balcony of a house on Telegraph Hill, or on the other side, over the roofs of houses built on the side of the hill, an almost sheer drop into the bay below. There are places like the Tonga Room in the Fairmont Hotel to call in for a before dinner drink,

where the band floated up and down on a pagoda in a pool in the centre of interior decorations representing the open deck of a ship, while periodic thunder storms with wind, rain and lightning effects livened up the scene. My favourite was a little bar in an hotel on the other side of the Golden Gate right up in the hills and looking back over the bay to the city beyond. So on and much more from South Sea bars to Armenian restaurants. I mention just some of all this as it may give some idea of the hodge-podge of cosmopolitan atmosphere that was very much part of our two weeks in San Francisco.

People were wonderful to us there as everywhere we have been, and there was much entertainment. The Dance League entertained us for brunch before the first matinee at Rock House, a restaurant on the Cliff overlooking the rocks in the ocean on which basked a colony of seals. The students of the Christensen School gave several parties and many people took groups of us for trips by car down the peninsula to the giant redwood trees in Muir Wood and many other places. On the day that I went to the wood was the first time that one of the famous fogs drifted in through the Golden Gate and filled the bay beyond yet left the hills quite clear. We crossed that bridge without even being able to see any of the structure.

It was not all one round of gaiety; far from it. There was a lot of hard work put in each day, to

rehearse an almost completely new second cast for *The Rake's Progress*, *Checkmate*, *Fdcade*, *Dante Sonata*, *A Wedding Bouquet* and *Les Patineurs*, at the studio of the three Christensen brothers, and slowly to infiltrate into the performances until nearly everyone had been on at least once with the original cast. This is in readiness for eking out the work all round while on the five weeks of one to three night stands ahead of us. These castings I will mention as they come into action in the weeks to come.

After the tremendous reception all round in Los Angeles it was a contrast to play to the more subdued house in San Francisco. Neither the papers next day nor what everyone said bore out this feeling; they could not have been more enthusiastic. It just took a little getting used to, but how nice to be back in an Opera House again, the first time that we had danced in anything other than Auditoriums since New York. Off hand I cannot think of any other city that has built an Opera House and a museum alongside as a war memorial.

At the end of the San Francisco season Miss de Valois returned to England and Robert Helpmann to Los Angeles, where I understand he is working on a film script with Michael Benthall. Pamela May and Gerd Larsen also went back to England, being casualties of the tour.

(To be continued)

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON BALLET THEATRE

by JANET SINCLAIR

THE first state in advanced ballet fever is reached when one takes a train to Croydon, Golder's Green or Wimbledon. Once take a train, once depart from one's habitual routine, and one is lost. *Ce n'est que le premier pas*—and through the opening of this initial door one progresses rapidly to a state of mind where a journey taken in search of ballet to Brighton, Edinburgh, Paris or Amsterdam becomes not a faint, beautiful dream but a simple necessity.

It is ultimately useless to become introspective about the reason why one goes to ballet so often, to attempt any analysis beyond the simple "Because I like it!" But occasionally some stroke of mild lunacy forces one to consider, say, what it is that pulls one half-way across a continent to some unknown and often hideously uncomfortable theatre in search of ballet.

It was just after the interval in the second performance given by the American National Ballet Theatre (to give them their correct title for once) in the Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam, that I became fully aware of the answer to my question. Good ballet can

pull one half-way over the world because there is no feeling in the world more delightful—or more rare—than that, in the course of such a performance as was that night given of *Interplay*, one might rise in the air and float upwards towards the roof, but for the restraining hands of one's neighbours.

This feeling of exhilaration is practically never one which can be experienced while watching performances given by—let's face it—an English company. In pre-war days, singing homewards after a good *Gaieté Parisienne*, one would have given all the credit to the Russian temperament; now, faced with the *joie de vivre* of the young American dancers of Ballet Theatre, with the sparkle of the opening movement of *Bourrée Fantastique*, with Petit's *L'Oeuf à la Coque*, one cannot attempt any positive classification of that light-heartedness in ballet which causes light-headedness in the audience, and the only possible classification is a negative one: that English choreographers do not possess that spirit of gaiety that gives us an *Interplay* or a *Mam'zelle Angot*. Our dancers can perform what

they are given, as we see in the comedy scenes of *Ballabile*, for example; the lack is in the native choreographer. We take our fun too seriously, too heavily, as in *Promenade* or *The Prospect Before Us*, we are self-conscious and cynical and slapstick as in *A Wedding Bouquet* or *Facade* or *Mr. Punch*. With an Englishman there is always a shadow of the fear of making a fool of oneself, the inability to let go, to drown in the champagne of the moment.

The American choreographer never seems diffident about letting himself go and about expecting his dancers to do the same. Such a ballet as *Rodeo* is a case in point—it must be performed with wholehearted abandon, it is not a piece for little ladies and gentlemen. These American works have a cheerful extrovert bounce unfamiliar among the more sober English. Perhaps they are more sincere and more soundly rooted in human nature: the Americans are a young nation (indeed, painfully young in other respects) and they avoid the pompous and the over-cynical in their ballets. This is not to say they cannot be serious, but when serious they are without affectation. It is this balletic sense of primary values that makes the work of Jerome Robbins the most significant since the pre-war Massine

and Tudor, and it is Ballet Theatre that gives us the best contrasted examples of Robbins' works in the current repertoire.

Fancy Free and *Interplay* were not new to Europe and it is unnecessary to comment on them further; they captivate audiences everywhere—though of the two it was surprisingly *Interplay* that had the greater success on the continent. *Facsimile* shows Mr. Robbins to possess a penetration of insight and a terrifying gift of observation at which one barely guessed from consideration of his two early light ballets and of the rather more sociological composition shown to us by the New York City Ballet. *Facsimile* is at the opposite pole from *Fancy Free* and *Interplay* because it forces thought, not sensation, upon the observer; and if the basic unpleasantness of incident and behaviour is shocking to the observer, it is a wholesome shock, the kind of shock which Shaw applied to the London theatre-goer when he wrote *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. There is no "épater le bourgeois" about this ballet, it is too deeply felt for that, and too adult. And how exciting and unusual it is, too, to see as one can in Robbins' five ballets, an importance laid on male dancing equal to the invention shown in movements for the *danseuses*.

Let one or two of the more vocal critics cry what they will, it is a solid fact that Ballet Theatre, with its varied repertoire, its gay young dancers and its cosmopolitan *ensemble*, has taken the place in the hearts of the Old Guard of the London audience held before the war by the Ballets Russes. They give us in Nora Kaye London's favourite visiting ballerina, a dancer who is so utterly the choreographer's instrument that she can excel equally in works by Tudor, de Mille or Robbins; the peak of aristocratic classical dancing in the partnership of Alonso and Youskevitch; the astonishing versatility of John Kriza; Paul Godkin, unique in speed and personality—but the list is too long and one could fill a page with the dancers and their accomplishments. Let us only implore whatever mysterious influences control the comings and goings of ballet companies to London not to make us wait another four years before our next glimpse of this most virile and versatile of visiting companies. Amsterdam or Paris is possible; New York—never too far—but too expensive, even for those of us who have reached the last state of advanced ballet fever.

Nora Kaye leaves Ballet Theatre

After ten years with Ballet Theatre, Nora Kaye has left to join New York City Ballet and will appear with them during their season which commenced on February 13th at the City Center. Amongst other ballets, she will dance in *Symphony in C* and *Age of Anxiety*.

YVETTE CHAUVIRE WITH ANTON DOLIN IN "GISELLE".
CHAUVIRE WILL BE APPEARING AGAIN WITH FESTIVAL
BALLET DURING THEIR LONDON SUMMER SEASON

Photograph by Duncan Melvin



THREE NOVELTIES

NEW YORK CITY BALLET COMPANY'S RECENT SEASON WAS CHIEFLY NOTABLE FOR ITS OVER-ALL ADVANCES RATHER THAN FOR ITS NEW BALANCHINE WORKS

By ARTHUR TODD

THE New York City Ballet Company's Fall Season, which was from November 21st through December 10th at the New York City Center, proved to be the most notable in its history despite the fact that all three of the new Balanchine novelties were of little lasting consequence. The fact that the company has matured considerably was evident from the first performance onwards and this was especially true of Maria Tallchief and Melissa Hayden. Though the company undoubtedly appeared at Covent Garden at least two years too soon, last summer's visit to Britain has given the whole company a far greater authority and stature and this is apparent in every ballet they perform. The *corps de ballet* must now be regarded as the best in any American company—unified, precise, crisp and buoyant. In addition to these noteworthy advances, Hugh Laing and Diana Adams, formerly two of Ballet Theatre's important assets, added considerable lustre to the rank of the New York City Ballet Company when they joined the organisation this season. Harold Lang, between commercial Broadway assignments, was also part of the fall season.

The first novelty was a revival of *Baiser de la Fée*, the ballet that Balanchine originally composed for the American Ballet back in 1937, when it was given two performances. It was revived again in 1940 by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo with Slavenska, Danilova, Krassovska and Eglevsky in the cast and had not been seen in New York since 1942. However, neither time nor the addition of further choreographic invention on the part of Mr. Balanchine has materially aided this ballet. Choreographically, its chief change is the introduction of *entr'acte* movement between the scenes but this failed to weld the scenes into a greater unity, if that was its purpose. Maria Tallchief as the Fairy gave the ballet its chief distinction, despite a most unbecoming blonde wig, and she danced with delicacy, grace and precision. Nicholas Magallanes, as the young Bridegroom who had first received the Fairy's kiss when he was a baby abandoned by his mother in a snowstorm, gave a generally negative and nebulous performance. Tanaquil Le Clercq, as the Bride, was also dramatically insecure and, at times, her shoulders and hands seemed awkward and lacking in grace. The peasant dance scene was by far the liveliest section in this over-long ballet.

Mazurka, the second novelty, based on the *Mazurka* from Glinka's *A Life for the Czar*, was completely unballetic and its chief claim to temporary interest was the fact that it returned Balanchine to us as a dancer and he performed his role with gusto and authority. This work was composed for four couples, who were beautifully costumed by Karinska, but one has come to expect something more than this operetta-type *divertissement* from a choreographer of Balanchine's stature. Later on in the season, Frank Hobi took over and creditably performed Balanchine's role without detracting in any way from Janet Reed's performance which, with Yurek Lazovsky as her partner, was the major bright spot in this work anyway, no matter who else was taking part in it.

The third novelty, the *Sylvia pas de deux*, was the big hit of the season as performed by Maria Tallchief, with practically no support from Nicholas Magallanes.

DIANA ADAMS WHO IS NOW APPEARING WITH
NEW YORK CITY BALLET



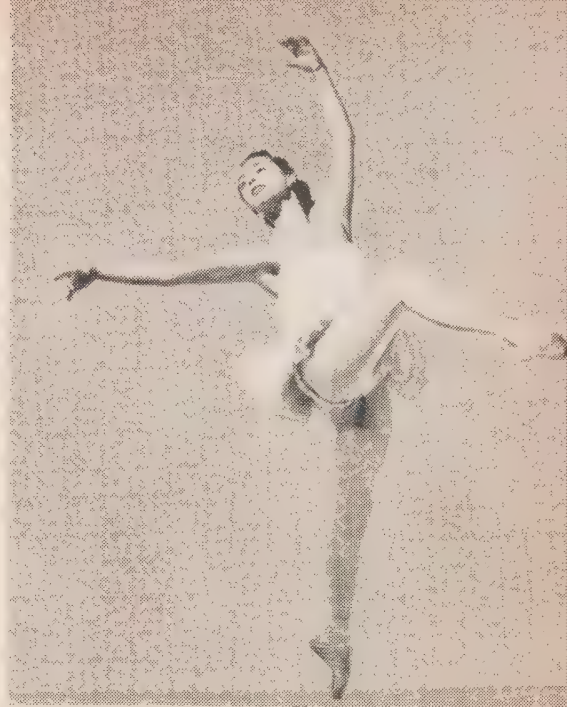
Composed along the traditional lines of the *entrée*, *adagio*, female and male solo and coda, it made full use of Tallchief's virtuosity and she danced the *entrechats huit* and front *attitude* turns with ease and brilliance. Magallanes, who replaced the injured Herbert Bliss at short notice, seemed entirely too tentative and this held true in all of the subsequent performances that followed the première. Aside from a faulty posture, with his pelvis placed too far forwards, his general deportment was lacking the necessary classical flavour.

This brings up an unpleasant but unavoidable subject—the lack of any really first-rate classical male dancers in the company. Certainly, this organisation is amply blessed on the distaff side but the corresponding lack in the male ranks is becoming increasingly evident. This is accounted for by some who claim that Balanchine considers male dancers of secondary importance so that they receive very few opportunities to be seen to advantage. Whatever the reason, it is high time that the company annexed at least one first-rate male classical dancer to support its ballerinas.

In the dramatic wing, Francisco Moncion and Hugh Laing excelled, as always, and by the Spring Season one can feel certain that Laing will have become more accustomed to his new co-workers and then we can really look forward to more of his distinguished performances. Already Laing has given us quite the most authoritative performance yet seen in America in the title role of *The Prodigal Son* and his portrayal of the Poet in Ashton's *Illuminations* is more penetrating and intense than Magallanes's depiction and thus the role, as Laing performs it, brings an even greater unity to this ballet. In the same ballet, Diana Adams as Sacred Love endows her role with a greater warmth and humanity than it has had heretofore, and Melissa Hayden, of course, is still nothing short of magnificent in her portrayal of Profane Love. *Illuminations* grows in stature on each re-seeing and one is constantly impressed by Ashton's rich invention in movement.

Aside from appearing in *Illuminations*, Diana Adams alternated in the leading roles in *Serenade*, *Orpheus*, *The Age of Anxiety* and *Symphonie Concertante* and in all of these her lyricism and feeling for line and flow were in evidence. On the other hand, Harold Lang, who seems to have stayed too long on Broadway, mainly danced Harold Lang and over-grimaced in a manner that was sharply at variance with the rest of the company. Ballet is still a far cry from Broadway but Lang performs the same in both media.

Most New Yorkers, to be sure, are in agreement with Londoners on the top-heavy supply of Balanchine ballets in the repertoire and certainly a whole evening of these works does seem like too much of a good thing. However, this does not mean that we do not deeply admire Balanchine's really great compositions,

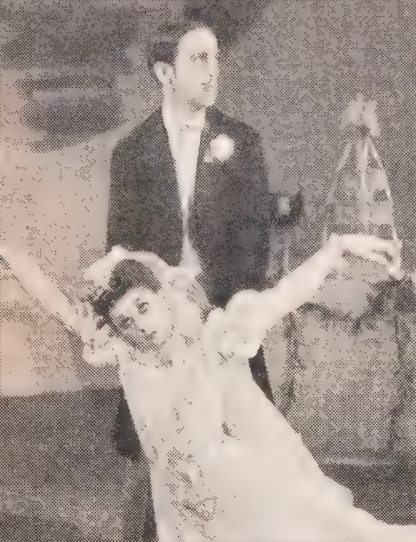


Photograph by George Platt Lynes

A NEW PHOTOGRAPH OF MARIA TALLCHIEF, PRIMA BALLERINA OF NEW YORK CITY BALLET

it is just that they would certainly be seen to greater advantage if they were interspersed with other dramatic and contemporary works. As a matter of fact, most Americans have reached the stage of dance appreciation that they can accept ballet or modern dance as an entity in itself without it being necessarily dependent on plot or decor. Perhaps that is why, for instance, so many of us were more enthusiastic over Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* than we were over Helpmann's *Miracle In The Gorbals*. Balanchine's masterworks, such as *Symphony in C*, *Theme and Variations*, *Ballet Imperial*, *Serenade*, *Symphonie Concertante* and *Divertimento*, are music-visualisations of major rank and we are as proud of these as we are of the marked progress that the New York City Ballet Company is making each season.

Walter Gore is giving the most entrancing performance as Harlequin in the very free adaptation of Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* now running at the Garrick Theatre under the title of *The Gay Invalid*. Everyone interested in learning exactly how expressive mime can be should make straight for the Garrick.



ROBERT HELPMANN

AS HE APPEARED SO OFTEN
WITH MARGOT FONTEYN
IN CLASSICAL BALLET

*Photograph by
Felix Fonteyn*

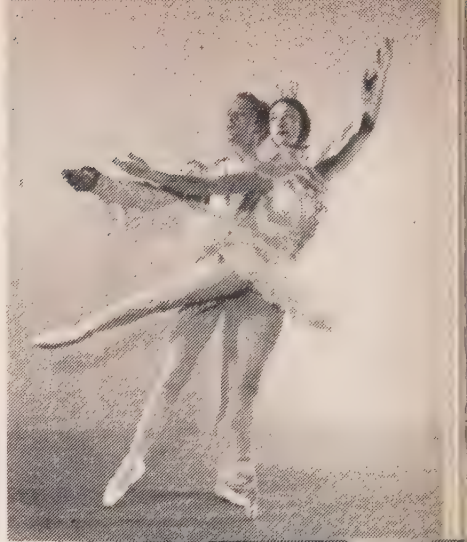
THE BRIDEGROOM IN
"A WEDDING BOUQUET"
WITH MARGARET DALE

*Photograph by
Felix Fonteyn*



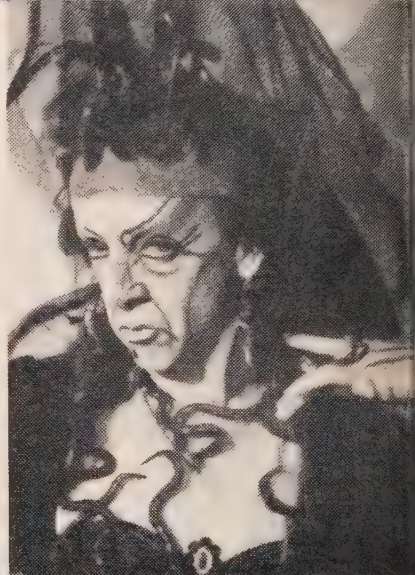
CARABOSSE IN "THE
SLEEPING BEAUTY"

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*



IN "NOCTURNE"
WITH PAMELA MAY

*Photograph by
Edward Mandinian*

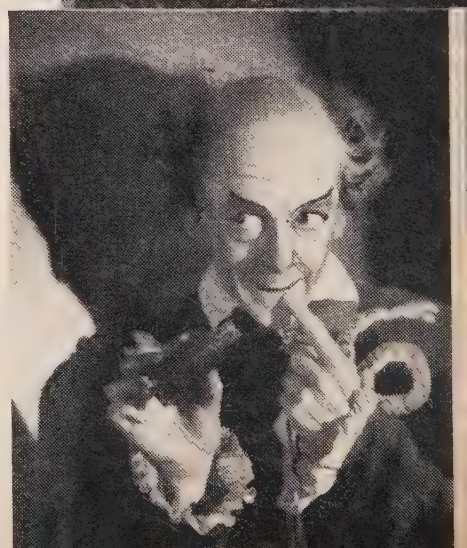


DOCTOR COPPELIUS
IN "COPPELIA"

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*

AS ONE OF THE
UGLY SISTERS IN
"CINDERELLA"

*Photograph by
Roger Wood*





A Gallery of Portraits

AS HAMLET IN HIS
OWN BALLET

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*



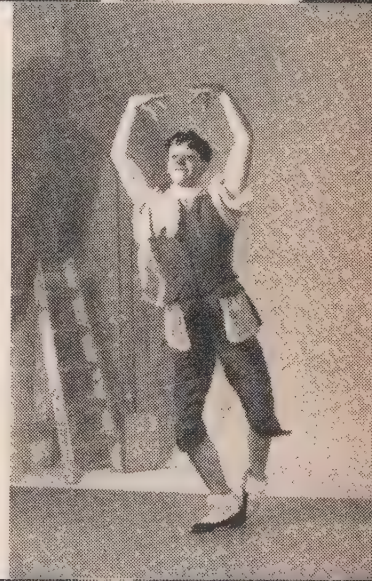
THE POET IN
" APPARITIONS "

*Photograph by
Angus McBean*



PRINCE FLORIMUND
IN " THE SLEEPING
BEAUTY "

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*



MR. O'REILLY IN
" THE PROSPECT
BEFORE US "

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*



THE RED KING IN
THE ORIGINAL
PRODUCTION OF
" CHECKMATE "

*Photograph by
Gordon Anthony*



THE RAKE IN
" THE RAKE'S
PROGRESS "

*Photograph by
Tunbridge*

HOW DANCERS ARE TRAINED AT THE MOSCOW SCHOOL (1)

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

WHAT impresses one most upon entering the Moscow Choreographic School of the Bolshoi Theatre is the order felt in each of its four floors. Perhaps you happened to come during an intermission. Then you will meet neat little girls who will drop a curtsy for you (curtseys, as one of the pedagogical methods, are obligatory up to the fourth class), or perhaps you will run into a *lineika* or lining up of the pupils for some solemn occasion. If it is a case of the misbehaviour of one of the pupils, the culprit has to stand in front of the line, while his or her conduct is discussed.

The school is always as busy as a beehive and just as perfectly organised. In Leningrad, in the very old building of the school, with its veritable maze of rooms on different levels, one has another feeling. In Leningrad I feel awed when entering the great rehearsal hall, or the school theatre, or the classroom where Johannsen taught, witnesses of so many great names of the Russian ballet.

In Moscow the entire school is run smoothly and efficiently from its centre—the director's study. Here managing director J. A. Rafailov goes into every detail of the school's organisation, and artistic director L. M. Lavrovsky guides the creative life. Of course the school is run through numerous sub-departments, such as the instructors' department or the educational department. Moreover the school has attached to it a permanent Art Council consisting of prominent members of the Bolshoi company including the retired ballerina, Geltzer.

But the "brains trust" of the school, its nerve centre, is in a small room called the *metodichesky kabinet*. The duty of this important department is to work out a uniform pedagogical method, founded on the best in the work of each teacher, and to work out programmes for each class and each term. The methodological department is constantly seeking further improvement in the method of teaching classical ballet.

The pre-revolutionary Russian school was based on the method of individual demonstration, of passing on the legacy from teacher to pupil by word of mouth or rather legs. The strong points of such an individual method, worked out independently by the teacher, are such that this kind of method is adapted to given concrete conditions and is supported by an experience of many years' standing. When a teacher sets before himself from day to day problems of a routine type, varying them in accordance with the material in the form of his pupils, he invariably works out with time

some exact methods of work, most effective according to the needs of his class.

But the individual system has many weak points: it is seldom carefully thought out. It would be difficult to decide at a lesson of such a teacher whether the success is explained by the scientific correctness of his methods, or by the teacher's personal qualities—his drive, his gift for demonstration. Would the same way of teaching be effective in the hands of another teacher?

A good practician in the teaching profession as a whole, and in ballet teaching in particular, is seldom strong theoretically. He arrives at his method quite blindly, and is unable to support it by sufficiently convincing explanations. There is always a risk of failure when even the best of teachers works according to this method. Often methods very effective when used by a *maître* fail in the class of an ordinary teacher. Also an individual method is worked out very slowly, taking years of search on the part of the teacher.

THE FIRST CLASS IS TAUGHT BY LYDIA RAFAILOVA, DAUGHTER OF THE CHIEF DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL, JOSEPH RAFAILOV



Of course every teacher in the end creates his own individual methods, applicable to concrete material in his class. But before arriving at this stage a teacher should master the theory of method in classical school, founded on the study of many individual methods.

All this is very important for a school of classical ballet, since it is always eager to recruit new teachers from among former or present dancers who in most cases are innocent of any pedagogical theory.

It is hoped to remedy this situation by forming a pedagogical department at the Moscow school, which would instruct dancers of the Bolshoi theatre who would like to teach, in the method and practice of teaching classical ballet.

The methodological department carries out a very fruitful work, taking in all the phases of the school's life. Its ever busy *senior methodist* is Alla Arsenieva, a graceful, quiet little woman, graduate of the Moscow school, and therefore thoroughly versed in all the intricacies of choreography.

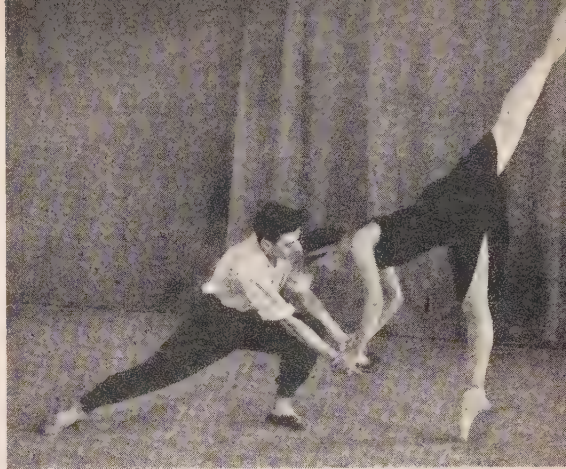
The methodological department has three sections: (a) methodology of the classical dance; (b) methodology of national character dances; (c) medical department, which studies the influence of classical training upon the organism.

The most productive, of course, is the classical section. Here Alla Arsenieva works together with the Moscow school's leading teacher Maria Kojukhova, whose classes serve as an experimental basis for methodological study. Kojukhova is a former member of the Leningrad Ballet, invited to Moscow in the early 'thirties when the school was being reorganised. She is a graduate of the 1915 class in Petrograd, and, like Vaganova, is a follower of the Russian school, constantly working on improvement of the method. She introduced some innovations in her class, such as cancelling the clasp of the *barre* with two hands for beginners, later adopted by the entire school. She leads an experimental shortened class, taking six years instead of nine and producing very good results.

But the work of the methodological department is not conducted solely by Kojukhova and Arsenieva. Each new proposal is discussed at the methodological conferences of all the teachers of classical ballet, who afterwards test the new methods in class. In this manner beginners were "turned by the hand" when the double clasp of the *barre* was abolished.

The methodological department revises old programmes and is developing an entirely new one, directed towards reorganisation of the present nine year course of classical education so that it takes seven years for the same amount of knowledge to be acquired. It is planned to have 8th and 9th classes, but only for ballerinas, who will combine these studies with practical work at the theatre.

The methodological department works out programmes for training pupils in dramatic expression—



TRAINING IN THE ART OF PARTNERING

this is a separate course, based on the Stanislavsky system. Pursuing development of scenic expressiveness, the school introduced in all classes study of popular extracts from classical ballets, varying in difficulty depending on the class. If the first class is learning the Little Fishes' dance from *Koniok-Gorbunok* (*The Hump-Backed Horse*), or the second, the Cupids' dance from *Don Quichotte*, then the senior classes might be learning the Shades from *La Bayadère* or any of the fifteen ballerina variations offered for the choice of the teacher.

It was also found necessary to introduce at an early stage in the senior classes work in "tutu" rather than soft practice tunics, because it takes some time to get used to dancing in a tutu and it is an entirely different matter for the boys in partnering whether the ballerina is in tutu or not.

In order to give the pupils proper stage experience the school has mounted the whole of *La Fille Mal Gardée* which is entered on the matinee programme of the Affiliated Bolshoi Theatre. Everyone agrees that seldom would one see a better professional performance of this old ballet.

In addition, the school presented a full performance of *The Nutcracker* at a matinee on December 10th. This was such a success that the management of the Bolshoi has "given" the ballet to the Affiliated Bolshoi and throughout the season the entire school, from the first to the ninth (final) class, will have professional experience while rehearsing and appearing in it. The Snowflakes *corps de ballet* in particular won great applause for its grace and precision, and Faier, the conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre who conducted this performance, said he would not wish for a better *ensemble* in a Bolshoi Theatre performance. This version of *The Nutcracker* is produced by Vassily Vainonen and is much more difficult technically than the Ivanhov original.

(To be continued)

THANKS, BALLET WORKSHOP

By FRANK JACKSON

BALLET WORKSHOP opened on Sunday, January 14th, at the Mercury Theatre with a programme of three original works—*On Lady Poltagrue* (choreography by Michael Holmes), *Colloque Sentimental* (Celia Franca) and *L'Homme et sa Vie* (Jack Carter).

Before considering these works in detail, special congratulations are due to the organisers, Angela and David Ellis, not only for taking the plunge and putting all their time, faith and cash into this venture but also for the professional way in which the evening was run. The show began on time; the intervals were mercifully short and the general stage management was efficient enough to arouse no comment. Considering all the difficulties involved, this is no small tribute.

Ballet Workshop is fortunate, too in having Michael Hobson to look after the musical side. Pianists as sympathetic to ballet are rare.

Though not one of the three ballets is of major importance all show a high standard of technical competence. Indeed, the technical competence of all the choreographers far outstrips their thematic material. This may be partly because, before the advent of Ballet Workshop, would-be choreographers had to think along certain well-defined and rather childish lines if they ever hoped to see their work on the stage. We mustn't upset our schoolgirl audiences! But now that Ballet Workshop exists, choreographers can allow their hearts and minds to develop with their technique. To criticise this first programme for a lack of adventurousness is therefore, it seems to me, to make a criticism of the condition of our ballet as a whole.

Not that Ballet Workshop should encourage experiment for its own sake. The experimental nature of a ballet should never be the sole criterion for its production here. But at least it can now be said that a place exists where a choreographer can experiment if he so chooses. That is the importance of Ballet Workshop. It is a forum, not a laboratory.

Michael Holmes's ballet, a slender affair built round a paradoxical joke about a lady who proved too clever for the Devil, made a light-hearted curtain raiser, though the joke would have been improved for being told in half the time. John Lanchbery's music for the ballet was suitably pleasant.

Celia Franca's *Colloque Sentimental*, to an arrangement of songs by Debussy set to some of Verlaine's poems, concerned itself with two lovers who try in vain to recapture the spectre of a past love. In general it caught something of the sweet, sad, nostalgic quality of the music, but was obscure in detail. The most

ambitious of the three ballets choreographically, it was also the one for which the Mercury stage seemed too small. At close quarters the costumes, too, were most unbecoming.

L'Homme et sa Vie was undoubtedly the most successful ballet of the first programme. It begins with a wonderful *pas de deux* for Celia Franca and a chair which is not only a delightful and welcome parody of Roland Petit, but interesting and amusing in itself. Not all the ballet quite lives up to this excellent beginning. The satire seems to evaporate at times, or else Carter has not made his point quite clear enough. Those with crossword minds will have a lot of fun listing the quotes he has made from other ballets. But even those who have not seen the originals which are parodied here will enjoy its genuine light-heartedness and wit. Jack Carter cocks such a snook at today's ballet idols that he should be asked at once to mount a work for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, which takes itself far too seriously and is in constant danger of being pompous.

Everyone on stage worked so hard and unselfishly that individual bouquets are really out of place, but I should like to mention the excellent work of Joan McClelland, Celia Franca, Hermione Harvey and Judy Gold.

I hope I have said enough to convince you that Ballet Workshop deserves your immediate support. What we should do without it I do not like to think and I am sure, even on the evidence of this one show, that before long members of the organisation will be shaking their heads wisely at some new ballet star and remembering the days when they first saw her—or him—at the Ballet Workshop at the Mercury.

Festival Ballet

Itinerary for their six weeks' tour is as follows:—
February 19th for 2 weeks, Hippodrome, Birmingham.
March 5th for 2 weeks, Opera House, Manchester.
March 19th for 2 weeks, Hippodrome, Bristol.

Paula Hinton, who made guest appearances with Festival Ballet during the latter part of the Stoll season, has now joined the company.

The Roger Wood action photograph on the cover shows Alicia Markova in Act I of "Giselle" by Festival Ballet

Balletomane's Bookshelf

LE BALLET CONTEMPORAIN. By Pierre Michaut.
(Plon, Paris, 1950. 960 fr.).

Pierre Michaut, President of the Association des Écrivains et Critiques de la Danse, is an eminent French critic and historian whose new book fills a serious gap in ballet literature: it covers the period from the death of Diaghilev (in 1929) up to the present day in considerable detail *from the French point of view*. As M. Michaut himself makes clear, Paris was not always an important centre of world ballet during this period: there was a dismal period in the late thirties when various financial difficulties made it almost impossible for the touring "Russian" companies to visit Paris, and during the Occupation activity was inevitably restricted. But the early thirties saw a remarkable variety of new productions, and the same was true of the period after the Liberation.

The period covered by the book corresponds almost exactly with Lifar's tenure of the post of *maître de ballet* at the Opéra, and M. Michaut quite properly devotes about half his book to Lifar's ballets. In England we find it impossible to understand how so indifferent a choreographer as Lifar should have achieved such a hold on the Parisian public: it is one of the merits of this book that it goes some way towards explaining this mystery. Lifar when young was irresistible. "It was impossible to escape from the charm of his light gliding steps, his caressing suppleness, the ferocious authority of his gestures. He reigned over the theatre. Much more than truth or profundity of expression or

evocation, he sought for novelty; and the patterns into which he deformed the figures of the dance appeared more than once gratuitous and laboured. Enthroned at the age of twenty-five as *maître de ballet* of the Opéra, and determined to impose himself there, he had to rely entirely on his own resources; but the foundation on which he built was exiguous."

Constant subjection to Lifar ballets is liable to make any critic deliriously happy when confronted with productions by such expert craftsmen as Fokine and Massine, and M. Michaut praises the later ballets of these choreographers (e.g. *Don Juan*, *Cendrillon* and *Gaieté Parisienne*) rather more highly than is customary in England. M. Michaut has watched these great artists at work, and his descriptions of their rehearsals are some of the best things in a remarkable book. Particularly valuable is his account of the cerebral and laborious methods employed by Massine in the composition of his symphonic ballets.

Mr Michaut is no less precise and informative in his accounts of the complicated processes whereby ballet companies come into existence—among them the de Basil Ballets-Russes, the Blum Ballets-Russes, the Ballets des Champs-Élysées, and the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet. His description of the formation of the Ballets des Champs-Élysées in the winter of 1944-45 is unforgettable. Roland Petit took the rehearsals on the icy stage of the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt, with Mme. Charrat and M. Jeanmaire bringing billets of wood to keep alight the stove that kept the dancers from freezing. . . . The *eldest* of the group, the impresario (Claude Giraud), was then only twenty.



DAVID ELLIS, SARA
LUZITA, RAYMOND
RAY AND JOAN MC-
CLELLAND IN CELIA
FRANCA'S "COLLOQUE
SENTIMENTAL"

Photograph by
Churton Fairman

No history of French ballet between the wars is complete without mention of Spessivtseva, and M. Michaut does full justice to this great artist—perhaps the greatest classical *danseuse* of all time. It is a measure of the extraordinary persistence of bad traditions in a State ballet that though Spessivtseva was appointed *étoile* of the Paris Opéra in 1924 and remained there until 1932, her supremely noble and touching performances had no effect on those of her colleagues. This is one example among many of developments in France which illuminate parallel developments in England. Sometimes the correspondences are even more striking: *Hamlet*, for example, was first planned as a ballet by Larionov, and was actually produced as a ballet by Nijinska in 1933. Though M. Michaut deals almost exclusively with ballets performed in Paris and Monte Carlo, the art of ballet is so cosmopolitan that his book is of international interest. FERNAU HALL.

THE BALLET ANNUAL (Fifth Issue). Edited by Arnold L. Haskell. (A. and C. Black, London. 21s.).

Since *The Ballet Annual* is by definition a record of past achievements it is doubtless very ungracious of me to cavil at its lack of originality, and yet I am always disappointed when the Annual appears and as I turn the pages I murmur with Stroganoff "But this I already know." As the text has to be so largely historical, the chief opportunity for variety is in the choice of illustration and the editors are obviously aware of the poor quality of the photographs since Mr. Swinson writes a special article about the difficulty of obtaining good ones. Could we not, then, have had more costume designs and settings for ballets? And could not the single colour plate have been a design (e.g., something by Clavé for *Ballabile*) instead of a repeat of the cover portrait of Miss Shearer?

While in carping mood it must be said that the Annual is not free from errors (Peter Williams may or may not be flattered to learn that he was responsible for the decor of *Pleasuredrome*) and this is a great pity for the chief value of the book is for reference in later years and every obvious slip makes the reader suspicious of its reliability.

However, this year's Annual contains much of real, indisputable value. Mr. Beaumont puts the funeral of Nijinsky on record for the ages; Lidova adds two more of her unique "Visages de la Danse Française"; and there are articles on Choreography for Television and on Physique and Ballet. Contributions from America include a wryly humorous account by Anatole Chujoy of how he wrote his Dance Encyclopedia; an introduction to Sol Hurok (who might well be billed "the Fabulous") by Irving Kolodin; a discussion of Balanchine's choreography by Walter Terry; and a careful chronicle of ballet activity by Ann Barzel. M.C.

Frederick Ashton's New Ballet

THE first new ballet of the Sadler's Wells season at Covent Garden will be *Daphnis and Chloe*, which will be seen in April. Frederick Ashton is using Ravel's score, while the designer will be Oliver Messel. Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes will be seen in the roles created by Karsavina and Fokine in the original Fokine ballet; Alexander Grant will be the chief of the pirates. The first version of this ballet was given by the Diaghilev Ballet Russes at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, in 1912. A revised version (without chorus) was presented at Drury Lane Theatre on June 9th, 1914, and incurred the displeasure of the composer who had apparently been very unwilling to make the alterations suggested by Diaghilev. Possibly because of this and other difficulties at that time (Fokine broke with Diaghilev soon after) the ballet was never a great popular success though it is musically considered a masterpiece. Those who know the beautiful story by Longus will need to bear in mind when they see the ballet that only part of the story is used and the ballet ends with the reuniting of Daphnis and Chloe after the fight with the pirates. Ravel's music is so explicit that there can be no departing from this choreographic plan, but both story and music are so suited to Ashton's gifts that we all await the first night with even more than the usual anticipation.

A Short Dancing Film

Keep an eye on your local cinemas to see if a film called *The Dancing Fleece* comes your way. Although it was officially made as export propaganda for the English Woollen Industry it is well worth the public showing which has now been decided upon. The propaganda side is never stressed and Harold Turner has made an excellent job of the choreography. A little imagination in the camera work would have sparked the fantasy into magic, but even so this twenty minute film makes good entertainment for anyone. I will not say that Harold Turner gives us the best male dancing yet seen in an English film, since this is to say very little: he dances well up to the high standard set by American films and proves how very premature was his retirement last year from Sadler's Wells Ballet.

BE SURE of your copy of *Ballet Today* by placing a regular order with your newsagent OR FILL IN THE SUBSCRIPTION FORM on the back page and receive it each month by post.



THESE THREE LITTLE SYLPHIDES ARE TAMARA JAKASHA, IRENE BATE AND VALERIE HOLLMAN, AND THIS IS HOW THEY APPEARED AT THE FIRST ANNUAL DISPLAY RECENTLY GIVEN BY THE SCHOOL OF RUSSIAN BALLET

Photograph by
William C. Clampitt

“PASTORALE” AT SADLER’S WELLS

JOHN Cranko's latest ballet, *Pastorale*, was given on December 13th at very short notice owing to the enforced cancellation of *The Witch* due to difficulties over the musical copyright.

The Scarlatti music which Cranko chose could not be orchestrated in time; instead he has used Mozart's *Divertimento No. 2 in D*. I own to a prejudice against Mozart for ballet but it has, for the most part, been so sensitively used that I am almost reconciled. No one, however, could be reconciled to Hugh Stevenson's pillared and garlanded backcloth. It is strangely removed from his usual good taste, crude in colour and design, and a distracting background to the dancers. His lighter costumes are charming but those for Blair and Poole are heavy and unbecoming and Beriosova's velvet draperies, beautiful in repose, are ungainly in movement.

The ballet rather strangely combines the authentic “Golden Age” atmosphere with the “playing at Shepherdesses” of the 18th Century but it establishes its own style with such certainty that this is hardly realised. The choreography contains no startling innovations but it has great facility and freshness and innumerable minor touches of invention which emerge with repeated viewings. There are a number of faults; the ballet is too long—the first movement could be

cut with advantage—and there is a false climax towards the end when the complete cast appears and forms a group for no apparent reason. There is a moment straight from *Giselle* and the finale is on rather conventional lines. However, *Pastorale* offers a wealth of lovely dancing and with the possible exception of the much-altered *Sea Change* is certainly Cranko's best work to date.

As usual he has completely understood the abilities of his dancers but the casting is very much according to type and reveals little that is new in their personalities. Patricia Miller and Pirmin Trecu as the happy Phyllida and Corydon dance splendidly. But Miller's delicate charm has now been exploited so often, it would be interesting to see her in a role with more depth of character. Trecu's promise is probably greater than any other male dancer's in the country; one can only hope that, like the Babilée whom he in flashes evokes, it will not go unfulfilled.

Svetlana Beriosova dances beautifully in her heavy-lidded Tragic Muse vein but adds little to her reputation, and David Poole has small opportunity for his special gifts as the Lover to whom she is eventually reconciled. It is with the entry of Elaine Fifield that the ballet really comes to life. With her combination of demureness, innocence, and nonchalantly brilliant

dancing she is quite entrancing as the unawakened Diaphenia and David Blair as the boy who does the awakening is engaging and dances well. Maureen Bruce, Pauline Harrop, Michael Hogan and Peter Wright gave attractive support as "Paramours".

At later performances Harrop, who is rapidly emerging as a soloist, has taken Fifield's role. Her

innocence is definitely tongue-in-cheek but she gives a gay and most effective performance. Stella Farrance, an excellent dancer never fully exploited, and Annette Page, one of the most interesting of the company's younger personalities, have also danced the Paramours and David Gill and Maurice Metliss have shared Michael Hogan's role. CHRISTINE HUNTER.

RAM GOPAL—HIS DANCERS AND MUSICIANS

by WINIFRED HOLMES

INDIAN dancing has created a public for itself in London, a public which, by now, is not only appreciative but critical. Uday Shankar, Shivaram, Mrinalina Sarabai have all helped us to understand and admire a totally different system of music and dance from our own. But our chief thanks are due to Ram Gopal, who has not only brought us the purest forms of classical Indian dancing, but has taken great pains to explain their mysteries to us.

Ram's two recent London seasons, at the Adelphi and the Cambridge Theatres, show that he is at the height of his powers as a dancer. His own technique in all four forms of classical Indian dancing, Bharata Natya, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri, is flawless and he has the power of conveying spiritual beauty which is the ideal aimed at in Hindu devotional dancing—the spiritual beauty which is the expression of harmony of mind, body and spirit.

We can always recognise a great dancer when we see one since all classical techniques in any dance form are characterised by definiteness and precision of movement, by style and line. Unfortunately, though Ram has able assistants, he has to carry too great a burden of responsibility for his company and productions. My own opinion is that he needs an Indian Diaghilev to support and help him in the stupendously difficult task of adapting Indian classical dancing to the Western stage while preserving its purity and original impulse. On the whole he succeeds in doing this admirably, but if he could have day to day conflicts and decisions taken off his shoulders he would be freer to give far more of himself to his own dancing, while the productions might be on a still higher level. It is too much to have to be star dancer, choreographer, producer, *maitre de ballet* and business man, and although he does miraculously achieve all these, his programmes would gain in power if such a person could be found.

In the Cambridge season the individual items were excellent in themselves but they could have been more impressive and closer to the original if the items in the different styles of dancing had been grouped together and each of them given more time in which to build up its effect and reach some sort of a climax. The effect

of scrappiness was unfortunate. In the earlier season, at the Adelphi, three pure Bharata Natya dances were grouped together in the order in which they are performed as a religious rite in the Tanjore temples. First *Alarippu*, an invocation which warms up the dancers, as it were, and gets them into the right frame of mind for the next dance, the *Thillana*, when "the god fills the hearts of the dancers with love and fire". The climax is reached in the third dance, *Natanam Adinar*, Siva's cosmic dance of creation. These three dances, exquisitely danced by Ram Gopal and Kumudini, the finest exponent of the feminine form of Bharata Natya we have seen in London, together created an unforgettable sense of mystery and religious fervour. The stage forgotten, the walls of a secret temple rose in its place, filled with worshippers. We who lack that kind of fervour and mystery, received an experience which we cannot get from our own ballet. It is this kind of experience that Ram Gopal would be well to give us whenever possible, rather than too many folk dances or charming Moghul and Rajput miniatures, however pretty and well-conceived.

The two Kandyan dancers from Ceylon, Sesha and Anura, bring masculine vigour to the programme. Their traditional dances are cruder and less sophisticated than Indian classical dancing, though influenced by Kathakali, and they retain a strong folk inspiration based on observation of the gait and movements of animals and birds.

Finally, while asking for fewer concessions to the West in the dances I would plead for fewer concessions in the music. Classical Indian music has infinite subtlety of melodic line and rhythm to make up for its non-use of harmony. Simplifying the variations on the *rags* reduces them to monotony; thins them to weakness. The addition of simple harmony does not compensate but only distracts. I would prefer the authentic colour, moreover, of *vina*, sarangi, bamboo flute and the human voice to that of violin and viola. Rajani Lakhia is a clever musician and executant, but in my opinion he is taking the wrong turning in his musical arrangements. And how much a conch shell, blown during the temple dances at the appropriate moment, would add to the sense of unearthliness!



Photograph by Duncan Melvin

SALLY GILMOUR AS SHE APPEARED WITH ANTON DOLIN
IN "GISELLE" WHEN SHE DEPUTISED FOR MARKOVA
AT A FEW HOURS' NOTICE

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

APART from some pleasing productions in the children's programmes, teleballet was produced less prolifically than usual in December, there being only the third programme in the *Ballet for Beginners* series and *Giselle*.

Of the children's programmes I was unfortunate in being able to see only very little, but it should be recorded that Domini Callaghan, in excerpts from *The Sleeping Beauty*, danced excellently and gained herself a number of new and youthful "fans".

A small neighbour of my own was enchanted with Princess Aurora and, I hear, awoke later in tears because he dreamed that "the Witch had got her". However, a brief resumé of the story soon brought the happy ending back to his mind and all was well!

The much misunderstood subject of the Male Dancer was ably dealt with by Felicity Gray in Philip Bate's production of *Ballet for Beginners* on December 4th, with demonstrations by Michel de Lutry (who, for some technical reason beyond my comprehension, gave

the unfortunate illusion that he was wearing fur tights) with David Paltenghi and David Blair. The number of *danseurs* who are David almost equals the record of pre-war cinema organists who were Reginald! The two Davids present on this occasion did great credit to their name and gave us some excellent examples of the function and art of the *danseur*.

Whether one should or should not make adaptations of *Giselle* is a question which my every instinct for self-preservation bids me to leave alone. Nevertheless, as an adaptation was made for television and presented on December 18th, I propose bravely to comment upon it, already aware that my views on this production are by no means unanimously held!

Théophile Gautier, upon reading Heine's *De L'Allemagne*, wrote to the author: "I involuntarily said to myself: 'Wouldn't this make a pretty ballet?'" and went on to record that he immediately commenced a draft of the libretto, but almost as soon abandoned the idea because of the seeming impossibility of adapting the atmosphere of Heine's story within the limits of stage technique. As we are grateful to know, he later reverted to his first intention and the ballet was presented in 1841 and has continued to be presented, in various forms, ever since.

Christian Simpson, then, would appear to have had every justification for returning to the source of Gautier's notes, letters, etc., and re-creating the ballet for television, on the grounds that this medium has opened up those very possibilities for portraying that "misty and nocturnal poetry" which Gautier feared could not be presented on the stage.

I would like to record here that I, for one, consider that he fully succeeded in doing this and, for the first time, I was more moved by Act II than by Act I. I felt an actual chill of fear down my spine as the ghosts—even though they were out of proportion—appeared transparently among the trees.

Some of Christian Simpson's pictures were unforgettably well composed; but oh! how I wish he would compose them without amputating the dancers' feet!

It was obvious that the producer had spared no effort in his researches into the roots of *Giselle*, and, as he had the co-operation of that eminent ballet historian, Mr. C. W. Beaumont, he had every facility for accurate knowledge at his disposal.

Tatiana Rjouboushinska, in the title role, showed considerable understanding in her rendering of it and danced as magnificently as she always does. Were she more often cast in this role it seems probable that she might soon be able to achieve an interpretation worthy of a high place in the ballet's history.

Tutte Lemkow, as Albrecht, failed to give entire satisfaction, but he has not had as much opportunity as the other dancers to become at home in the medium of television. David Paltenghi was a thoroughly

human and dislikable Hilarion—how excellent is this artist's acting!—and Celia Franca remains one of the best of the contemporary interpreters of the Queen of the Wilis.

The rest of the cast was recruited from the Ballet Rambert, and Madame Marie Rambert, who gave us a delightful introductory announcement, herself guided the cutting and re-arrangement of the dances for television. There was an enormous amount of work in this task alone, but Herculean labours are in the Rambert tradition.

Now that teleballet has become an integral part of the television scene, it is worth recalling that Ballet Rambert was the first company to perform in this medium!

Ballet Rambert

February 19th. Connaught Theatre, Worthing.
February 26th. Opera House, Tunbridge Wells.
March 5th. Grand Theatre, Swansea.
March 12th. Essoldo Cinema, Penge.

The Ballet Rambert is rehearsing a new ballet by David Paltenghi which will have its première during the first week of the Bath Festival in May. It is a light ballet based on an incident in the social history of eighteenth-century Bath.

International Ballet

International Ballet are now in the second week of the engagement at the Streatham Hill Theatre. They are appearing at the De Montford Hall, Leicester, for one week commencing February 26th, and will be at Golders Green Hippodrome for two weeks from March 5th.

London Ballet Circle

The London Ballet Circle have just embarked on a particularly interesting programme of lectures. Harold Turner was the speaker on February 18th, and a recent showing of ballet films (arranged with the co-operation of Mr. A. H. Franks, assistant editor of *The Dancing Times*) was so successful that another one is being arranged for the end of March if possible. On March 18th John Cranko will speak on Elements of Choreography, illustrating his lecture with demonstrations by members of Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. As usual, this lecture will be at 3 p.m. at the Salle Erard, Great Marlborough Street. Classes for beginners and more advanced students are held at the West Street Studios by Mr. Jack Carter. Full particulars from the Secy., Stanley Hawkins, 132 Kensington Pk. Rd., W. 11.

Bouquet of the Month



The bouquet this month is for Vassily Trunoff of Festival Ballet who electrified audiences with his dancing of the Trepak in *Casse Noisette*. This revived for us the almost forgotten art (outside Russia itself) of Russian character dancing. The *double saut de basque* is a virtuoso step very rarely seen: Trunoff performed it both to the left and to the right—a formidable achievement indeed.

The Editor,
Ballet Today.

Dear Madam,

I should like to bring to the notice of your readers the existence of the Federation of Russian Classical Ballet which is a non-profit making organisation founded May 1950 by a group of international dancers and teachers, under the patronage of Mathilde Kschesinska.

The object of the Federation is to assist in preserving faithfully the Russian Style and Method of Classical Dance adapted from the teachings of Nicolas Legat. It is our belief that there has not existed until now a satisfactory and practical syllabus to meet the particular needs of the Russian School. Our new syllabi of Examinations have been designed to meet those requirements, and to provide the student trained in the Russian School with similar facilities to those afforded by other schools and academies.

The Federation does not seek to try and popularise this fluent style of dance which has become very rare in the world, but rather it is our purpose to cultivate and stimulate conditions in our own confines, thus to ensure a continuance and progressive development of our particular branch of the art.

It is our hope that other Institutions of the Dance, whose object like ours is to advance the art, may recognise the sincerity of our endeavours.

Yours very truly,

For The Federation of Russian Classical Ballet,

JOHN GREGORY, Administrator.

PATRICIA SPALDING,

Secretary General.

BALLET VOCABULARY

Compiled by LEO KERSLEY and JANET SINCLAIR

While the listener can enjoy a piece of music to the full without knowing the difference between a minim and a crotchet, musical discussion is made smoother when the *amateur* has some grasp of technical terms, and the same is felt to be true of ballet, for some of the more and awkward descriptions and gesticulations are avoided if the *entrechats* of the dancer can be mentioned instead of speaking of his jumps into the air wagging his feet backwards and forwards.

For this reason it has been decided to publish a non-technical description of steps used in classical ballet, and it should be noted that this is intended solely for members of the audience and in no way for professional dancers. For the sake of completeness, such terms as *arabesque* and *attitude* (which surely every member of the audience can identify after three visits to the ballet) have been included, together with rather less easily identifiable movements.

Some terms will be included out of alphabetical order when this will help to make them clear in the reader's mind; and in most instances an example from a well known ballet will follow the definition.

N.B. Of course, one cannot "spring" without first bending the knee or knees (*plié*) but for conciseness the word "spring" will often be used without mentioning this necessary preliminary.

BALLET VOCABULARY (1)

ARABESQUE

A dancer is in *arabesque* whenever the leg is extended behind him with the knee straight and the foot pointed, and the supporting leg either straight or bent.

In a *penchée arabesque* the dancer stands on one straight leg in *arabesque* and then leans forward and back again in a slow see-saw movement keeping the body and raised leg in fixed alignment. It can also mean simply the moment when the leg is at its highest and the hand almost touching the floor.

Swanilda as she takes the mirror from Dr. Coppélius (Act 2 of *Coppélia*) steps into an *arabesque allongée* position—i.e., one in which the line of the body and raised leg is roughly parallel to the floor—slowly revolves once, and then does a *penchée arabesque* followed by a back bend.

ATTITUDE

An *attitude* is similar to an *arabesque* except that the back leg is bent: in Russian training the foot may be above knee level whereas with Italian dancers it is always below. If the leg is held in front and bent this is an *attitude en avant*. (see *jetée*).

At the end of the Rose Adagio, Aurora is taken round by each of her four suitors successively in *attitude*.

PROMENADE

A *promenade* is when a dancer steadily turns on the spot in a position, moving the heel inch by inch, as in *Coppélia* quoted above; and also when a man takes his partner round in a position on point, as in the Rose Adagio above.

* * *

ASSEMBLÉ

An *assemblé* is a firm step ending on both feet. The dancer stands on both feet, bends the knees, throws one leg out either to front, side or back, and jumps off the other: while ascending, the raised leg continues to rise. On landing, both feet close down together. This step can be done on the spot, or travelling in the direction of the raised leg, or turning; and, when it is to the side, beaten (this is sometimes called *entrechat de volé*).

Assemblé can also be performed from a position where one leg is raised, by jumping and landing with both feet together.

TEMPS DE POISSON. From both feet, spring up very high, raising the arms, arching the back and bending the feet and head well back.

In the second diagonal of his solo, the male dancer of the Blue Bird *pas de deux* performs a series of three alternating *temps de poisson* and *assemblé porté battu* (travelling beaten *assemblé*), and Albrecht's final solo consists of *assemblé* to the side, *temps de poisson*, walking step forward, repeated.

IF YOUR NEWSAGENT CANNOT SUPPLY
"BALLET TODAY"

POST THIS TODAY

To—"BALLET TODAY",

15 Penrhyn Road, Kingston-on-Thames.

Please send "Ballet Today", POST FREE, for the next 12 issues for which I enclose 13/- (Overseas 13/6)

NAME
(BLOCK LETTERS, PLEASE)

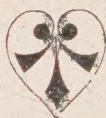
ADDRESS.....

DATE.....

Why not take out a subscription as a gift to your friend?
— Every copy will be a reminder of your regard! —

Over 25 Years' Professional Experience

**AUCTIONEERS, VALUERS &
ESTATE
AGENTS**



B.&P. HERSCHEL F.V.A.

15 Penrhyn Road (opposite County Hall)

KINGSTON - ON - THAMES

Phone KINGSTON 2639 - 3414

HOUSES FOR SALE

from £2,000 to £10,000

in

Kingston : Coombe Hill : Malden : Surbiton
Tolworth : Ditton : Esher

Mortgages arranged

Rents collected

Insurances effected